

American Opinion Summary

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RUSSIA AND CUBA

The U.S. must react forcefully if Castro carries out his threat to fire on U.S. planes, a number of editors suggest. If Castro wants war with the U.S. he "shall have it by simply carrying out his threat," the New York Herald Tribune asserts.

Aerial reconnaissance must continue "until an on-the-ground inspection system has been developed," the New York Times declares, adding: "If Castro shoots, we shall shoot back." The Washington Star suggests that our reaction "should take the form of destruction...of the anti-aircraft bases or fighters which might be used against us."

Scripps-Howard's Washington News says: "Immediate armed response is certain if Castro fires on our planes. But even if he doesn't, the United States should proceed without further delay to clean up this situation." The News adds that a "tightening of the blockade to include Cuban oil supplies might be a preliminary step."

Several are apprehensive that the U.S. may have lost momentum as negotiation has been prolonged (Christian Science Monitor, Cincinnati Enquirer, Wm. R. Hearst, Jr.). According to the Monitor, maintenance of U.S. momentum "is essential," and: "It should be made clear that the arms blockade will not only be continued but perhaps intensified unless progress is made."

The Chicago News suggests that the Russians could "gain by out-waiting" the U.S., "unless the administration acts soon to nail down the advantage won by exposure of Russia's treachery in the missile deal."

But others support the administration's negotiation policy, or counsel patience (e.g. Denver Post, Louisville Courier-Journal, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Wash. Post, Wm. H. Hessler). The Post-Dispatch says: "Having just gained a tremendous strategic victory in compelling the Soviets to take their missiles out of Cuba, President Kennedy is entitled to the country's confidence that he is not going to trade any vital national interests away."

William H. Hessler concludes: "The restraint, caution and patience required for good timing, in diplomacy or war, should not be confused with softness, appeasement or indecision" (in Cincinnati Enquirer).

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